

Your Place of Discovery

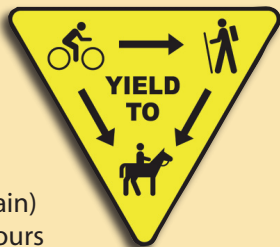
Randall Henderson Trail

From dry desert washes to shady remote canyons, the Randall Henderson Trail is a wonderland of discovery. Three trail loops—the Wash, Cholla, and Canyon Loops—introduce visitors to a typical low-elevation desert environment with its variety of plants and animals. Outstanding features include wildlife habitat comprised of cacti and other low-desert vegetation, plus up-close and personal views of the Santa Rosa Mountains. The trail also skirts habitat for the endangered Peninsular Bighorn Sheep. To protect all resource values, please stay on the marked trail, and be sure to stop at the numbered posts that correspond with the information contained in this brochure.

This trail celebrates Randall Henderson's vision for Palm Desert and the famed El Paseo, a.k.a. "Rodeo Drive of the Desert." Henderson was editor of the original *Desert Magazine*, as well as a founder of the Desert Protective Council, a grassroots organization that since 1954 has promoted, celebrated, and protected natural and cultural wonders of California's deserts through education, advocacy, and science.

Rating: Easy

2.5 mile loop trail
Begins: 1,000 feet
Top elevation: 1,425 feet
(425-foot total elevation gain)
Time recommended: 1.5 hours



Plan Ahead Before You Go

Stay On Trails

Bag Your Trash

Be Considerate Of Other Visitors

Keep Wildlife Wild

Leave It As You Find It



How can I learn more?

National Monument Visitor Center

51-500 Highway 74, Palm Desert, CA 92260
760/862-9984 Open Daily, times vary seasonally
www.palmspringslife.com/santarosa

Friends of the Desert Mountains

PO Box 1281, Palm Desert, CA 92261
760/568-9918
www.DesertMountains.org

Bureau of Land Management

Palm Springs South Coast Field Office
1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262
760/833-7100 Open Weekdays 8 am-4:30 pm
www.blm.gov

US Forest Service

54270 Pinecrest Avenue
P.O. Box 518, Idyllwild, CA 92549
909/382-2921 Open Daily 8 am-4 pm;
closed Thursdays during the winter
www.fs.fed.us

City of Palm Desert

73-510 Fred Waring Dr, Palm Desert, CA 92260
760/346-0611 Open Weekdays 8 am-5 pm
www.cityofpalmdesert.org

Santa Rosa
& San Jacinto
Mountains

NATIONAL MONUMENT

10th Anniversary
2000-2010

Randall Henderson Trail



Friends of the
Desert Mountains

1. Who's in Whose Backyard?

The area around the Visitor Center is an example of "front country" where humans and the natural environment get to know one another. As you travel towards the back country, sounds of human activity give way to songs of nature. To learn how you can "become one with nature," see the Leave No Trace information on the back.

2. Our Evergreen

Most of those green shrubs you see along the trail are Creosote Bushes, which maintain their shade of green all year long unlike many plants which become dormant in summer. Creosote Bush is the leader of the "green movement" - it's the most common plant in the Coachella Valley.



Creosote
Larrea tridentata

3. Anybody Home?

Holes and dens come in many shapes and sizes. These "critter condos" are comfortable places to live for many animals. Can you guess who resides in them?

4. Watch Out for the "Wait-A-Minute Bush"

Commonly known as Catclaw Acacia, its curved thorns tend to grab hikers' clothing, thus earning its nickname. The smart hiker will give this plant a wide berth when passing by.

5. "Salt & Pepper" Rocks

Granite makes up the majority of the rock formations in the National Monument. Depending on the ratio of mica, feldspar, and quartz, granite can appear light, dark, or some shade in between. Look for lichens growing on these rocks. Did you know that lichens are comprised of fungus and algae?

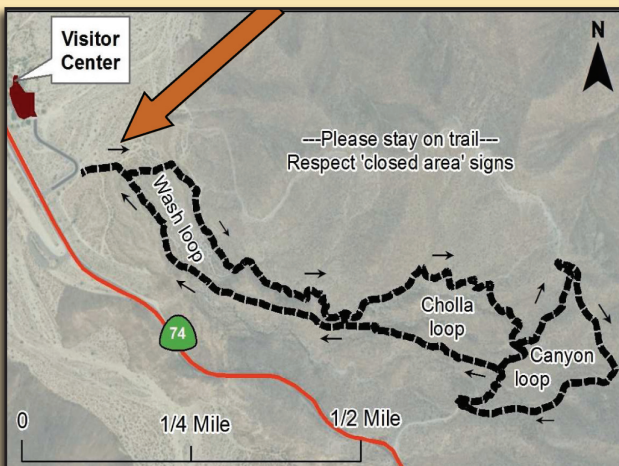
6. Racing Reptiles

Attention lizard-watchers! Many species of lizards can be seen here as they climb steep cliffs in search of insects. How many can you spot?

Option: return to Visitor Center via Wash Loop

7. You're in Bighorn Sheep Country

The desert's largest herbivore prefers steep, rocky slopes where they are safe from predators. Bighorn sheep are so well camouflaged, they can be difficult to see. If you hear gravel sliding down the mountain, look UP; it could be from movement of a bighorn sheep.



8. Wanted: Dead AND Alive!

How many types of cactus can you see from here? Look closely for the woody skeletons of dead cacti. In death comes new life with the habitat these skeletons create for lizards, pack rats, and other small animals.

Option: return via Cholla Loop, ahead

9. Sneak a Peek at Peaks

Forested Toro Peak rises 8,716 feet above the Coachella Valley to the south, while Mt. San Jacinto, often snow-covered at 10,834 feet, is magnificently outlined when the sun sets in the west.

Travel south on a dirt road to the next stop.

10. Rusty Rocks

Patina, a dark brown film often found on the surface of rocks, is produced by oxidation over a long, long time. It's similar to what happens when you leave tools in the yard and forget about them.

11. Watch for Moving Rocks

They may actually be Desert Tortoises! Do not touch or disturb them. They carry much-needed water in their "bladder canteens" and may release it when scared. While Tortoises were believed to be absent in the southern part of the Coachella Valley, it appears their numbers have recently increased along the Henderson Trail.



12. Beware the Teddy Bear

Looks like a Teddy Bear, feels like a pincushion! Getting impaled by a Teddy Bear Cholla is an unforgettable experience. Their spines have barbed hooks, making this cactus VERY painful to remove. Because it seemingly leaps onto passers-by, it is also called *Jumping Cholla*. Take note: some desert birds carefully build nests among its spines to protect their young. Also watch for a Barrel Cactus alongside the trail ahead.



Ocotillo
Fouquieria splendens

13. Another Stickler

Ocotillo, the spindly pole-like plant just ahead, is a common hangout for birds. Look for a Hummingbird or Sparrow perched on one of its branches.

14. Palms to Pines Scenic Byway

This Byway includes Highways 74 and 243 which twist and turn through several ecosystems en route to Idyllwild and Banning. Fantastic views abound as you leave the urbanized Coachella Valley, travel through craggy mountains and alpine villages, and descend to join Interstate 10 at Banning Pass where San Geronio Peak—the highest point in southern California—looms to the north.

15. Look Familiar?

Do you see the conspicuous desert wash in the canyon below? It's the loop trail you followed to reach the point where you're now standing. From down there, however, the landscape looked "up" and provided a very different perspective!

16. Tank Up

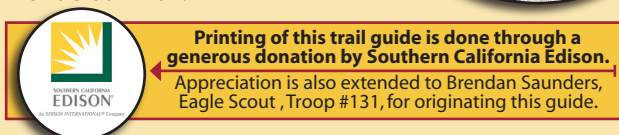
If your canteen or water bottle still has water in it, now is a good time to drink more! Exercise and a warm, dry climate accelerate dehydration. Don't become a medical statistic.

17. Ridge Mystery

The long narrow ridge before you is a remnant of an ancient alluvial fan. Geologists date its origin to the Pleistocene Era, occurring over 11,000 years ago.

18. Flash Flood

In September of 1976, this area was flooded by Storm Kathleen. A flow of debris swept through the spot where today the Visitor Center is located, destroying everything in its path. Smoke Trees, Cheesebush, and other vegetation have since regrown. Although slow to recover, the desert is certainly resilient.



Printing of this trail guide is done through a generous donation by Southern California Edison.

Appreciation is also extended to Brendan Saunders, Eagle Scout, Troop #131, for originating this guide.